

The Riverporter

ST IVES AWARD WINNING
NEWSPAPER

Issue 48: 22 November 2019



A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

From Hotel to Truck Park?

Along with a planning application to redesign the Dolphin Hotel's river frontage comes the suggestion to stop public parking at the hotel and turn it into a Truck park.

A company, Canalview Hotels Ltd have made a planning application to redesign the Dolphin Hotel river frontage, along with updates to the patio area and interior (see below). We understand that St Ives Town Council have recommended refusal of the plans saying that the illuminated sign is out of keeping and they have requested further information on the proposed colour scheme.

Additionally the council have requested information following the action on recent noise pollution that caused a considerable number of complaints earlier this year.

Social media speculation that the Dolphin has been sold to Canalview Hotels Ltd is unconfirmed as a previous Dolphin plan appeared to suggest that only the bars and restaurants were to be leased to a third party. To read more details of the planning application readers can check out the application at <http://tiny.cc/1901797FUL>.

On a separate matter a *Riverporter* reader, concerned about the state of the Hotel, wrote the following to Best Western:

'As a well travelled businessman for 40 odd years I always thought that Best Western was a trademark for good hotels world wide. I have had to revise my opinion.'

He went on to complain about the decor, service, general scruffiness, food, parking and noise and the state of the entrance which has remained dug up for 3 months (below).



Best Western responded, but could only point out that all Best Western hotels are independently owned and managed, so they could not help.

Ravi Gupta, The owner of the Dolphin also responded, saying: *'In relation to the entrance, we are still waiting for the insurance adjusters to visit the hotel so that we can be indemnified for the water loss. Until they approve the claim, we will not be able to repair the dug up portion of the parking lot.'*

Parking for Trucks?

Mr Gupta continued with the following: *'Also, please note that we will eventually be stopping public parking in the very near future so any concerns about parking charges should cease. Parking will remain free for hotel guests only. The remainder of the parking will be leased to local trucking companies so that they can have access to truck parking and the adjoining fields where I understand they will be expanding to. This should be beneficial to both town and hotel.'*

See Inside - More planning concerns • Road Safety • George's Return and Police & Crime Commissioner latest.

Dolphin Hotel river frontage design proposal



**SCREEN
ST IVES**
Corn Exchange

2:30pm Sunday
1st December 2019
Doors open 2pm

Special Christmas Screening
Royal Ballet 2018 production of
THE NUTCRACKER



Tickets

£10 (£5* Child)

Available online
screenstives.org.uk

In advance and on screening day at the Corn Exchange

*Under 13 and accompanied by an adult

Welcome back from Coventry



George's Bakery returned to St Ives Farmers' Market last weekend with balloons and customers galore. The Riverporter was on-hand to photograph the occasion and just by chance recorded Toni Drew and Kelvin Wilson, who had travelled all the way from Coventry that morning to buy some of George's cakes. Was only a few weeks ago that George was sent to Coventry by the Town Council? When asked how they knew of George's amazing cakes the couple said they saw them on Instagram.

Reflections of Remembrance

This year's Remembrance parade took place in true St Ives style with Market Hill bathed in bright sunlight on a chilly Sunday morning, and as always those that represent our armed forces, the town's youth organisations, the churches and our town councillors were, once again, immaculate in their attire and attention to detail.

It is such a pity that the organisers of the commercial market would choose the same day to occupy one of the key observation areas for the townsfolk who turn out in their hundreds to show their respect for this most important occasion.

The market stalls, although not trading during the ceremony certainly took up a lot of space,

blocked the view and many voices were heard complaining of the unfortunate timing of the event.

It was also a shame that again the poor quality of the sound system didn't help the audience hear the important words of the ceremony.

While the presence of these market stalls on the Sunday appeared to spoil the occasion, Monday's Town Market that fell on the 11th seemed to add a poignancy that was truly moving.

Monday's weather was cold with continuous freezing rain but as the moments before 11am approached the market fell silent and still as the



small group from the British Legion were called to attention. Every sound could be heard without the aid of any microphones and I observed people standing in true respect with one elderly gentleman noticeably shivering with the cold, soaked by the rain which served in masking the tears running down his face, and as the silence lifted the market started again as though a magic finger had released the pause button.

Road Safety Committee needed more than ever

The St Ives Road Safety Committee has been in existence since 1947 and we feel they are needed now more than ever, at a time when funding for road safety has declined and slipped down the political agenda.

The terrible accident at the Wheatsheaf crossroads last week highlights this. Cambridgeshire, as a whole, has not performed well in comparison with neighbouring counties and will almost certainly miss its casualty reduction target for 2020.

This is partly to do with the nature of the local road network and in particular the very large number of single-carriageway rural roads in the county which are especially dangerous. 81% of fatalities in Cambridgeshire occur on these roads as opposed to 60% nationally.

Speeding is also a serious problem everywhere and enforcement measures by the police suffer from a lack of resources. The County Council is embarking on a programme of speed camera digitalisation which should make cameras more reliable.

St Ives itself has a number of road safety problems. There have been two serious accidents, one fatal, in Meadow Lane over the last 12 months. Drivers turning left from Needingworth Road tend to concentrate on traffic coming from the right so the pedestrian crossing is at risk, as are vehicles leaving the car park.

Many patients going to the Cromwell Surgery have to cross Cromwell Place where there is a lot of traffic. We counted 400 vehicles in an hour on a Monday morning.

The elderly and mothers with infant children are most at risk.

A more recent concern is the inadvertent behaviour of some drivers when approaching the A14 flyover.

Impatient drivers jumping the traffic lights are another hazard particularly on Harrison Way and at the Houghton Rd/ Hill Rise junction. St Ivo school is very concerned about the dangers to the children who have to cross Houghton Road and Hill Rise to get to school.

All of these problems are serious but not insurmountable and we hope that with a renewed emphasis on road safety as a partnership between residents, the council and the police we can reduce the dangers we all face.

Screen St Ives

Thursday 5th Dec 2019 Screen 2

SOMETIMES, ALWAYS, NEVER

Director: Carl Hunter UK, 2018, 1h 29m

A man searches tirelessly for his missing son who he has not seen in years. When a body is located, the entire family's life is turned upside-down and they must all learn how to reconnect with one another.

Doors open at 7.30pm and films start at 8pm.

Refreshments are available before the screening. All tickets cost only £5, and are available online or in person at the Corn Exchange, St Ives.



Snowman Exhibition

An exhibition of Snowmen made by pupils of Thorndown School decorated the Bridge Chapel recently.

Pictured are: (right) Lilly Lyogue and (below) Rune and Edie Luck who came to see their Snowmen.



Left: The jolly little snowmen being put up around the town last weekend by volunteers.

Hunts Lib Dems dine in St Ives



Local Lib Dems feel that they may have a chance to take the Huntingdon seat in next month's General Election, given Jonathan Djanogly's problems. They dined at Sleaford Hall with guest speaker Norman Lamb, who was, unusually, a popular MP. It seemed appropriate, as this was Mr Lamb's last engagement and he was on his way home to Norfolk having cleared his desk at Westminster after deciding not to stand again. He last spoke to the local party when he first took office 18 years ago.

1,000s sign Petition

A second crash at the crossroads between Somersham Road and Wheatsheaf Road, involving a van and three other vehicles resulted in traffic delays just days after the huge incident at the same spot.



It came just four days after the previous crash at the same location (above), which took the lives of two and left a further 18 injured.

The Wheatsheaf junction has been on this list for improvement for over 10 years but financial constraints have proved to be an insurmountable obstacle in finding a solution. Resident Rachel Fabb set up a petition to campaign for traffic lights at the road, which is available here: www.change.org/p/cambs-county-council-highways-major-improvements-needed-to-b1040-wheatsheaf-crossroads-main-road-somersham-to-st-ives

having your say ...



Dear Erik PAWS FOR THOUGHT

Get it off your chest, email *Erik* at: editor@theriverporter.uk

Dear Erik

I would like to express, with your help, my thanks to a lovely lady, Jenny.

Jenny went out of her way to give me, a stranger to her. A lift home from the dentist this week. An act of kindness that blew me away. If you see this Jenny, I was so grateful and would like you to know how much your kindness meant to me. Thank you Anne



Hearts and great minds

Pictured are Superwomen Jean Chandler, Helen Hunter and Anne Strong receiving the Outstanding Contribution Award at the recent British Heart Foundation Heroes Awards from The Duchess of York.



David Watkins (above), from the Langley Trust presented a cheque for £300 to St Ives Day Centre for which they are very grateful.

Staff and volunteers at St Ives Day Centre held a quiz night last Saturday to raise funds for the members Christmas raffle. The team in lucky last were happy with their chocolate prizes (below).



Can Jason Ablewhite remain our District Councillor?

Well the speculation has been ongoing about what monumental thing has happened to make Jason Ablewhite quit his 'reasonably' rewarded position as Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)? It seems a complaint had been received regarding social media posts, which Cambridgeshire Constabulary assessed to be of a criminal nature.

Known for his reputation as a 'hard hitting' politician it is considered that something serious will have happened for him to resign, especially as the investigation into the complaint had hardly started. Mr Ablewhite was almost always controversial. During the election for the post of PCC in 2016 he was criticised for using the term Pikey and referring to two Spanish Asylum seekers found in an inflatable grotto lorry, in a 2010 Facebook exchange with Ryan Fuller and Tom Sanderson. Recently Ablewhite didn't endear himself to a number of long serving ex-mayors and councillors when he criticised them for not doing St Ives any favours. When asked to explain this remark his office said 'He attended the meeting and made the comments because he is entitled to do so.'

At the Town Meeting he told the public 'The fact that the Police and Crime Commissioner is now cheaper to run than the former Police Authority, then you save that money in your pocket or I can give it to the Chief Constable for more cops.' A statement *The Riverporter* queried, and which the PCC's office apologised for, stating: 'Mr Ablewhite had not intended to mislead the audience.'

Mr Ablewhite's most recent appearance in St Ives was to present a petition to the Town Council on behalf of George's Bakery, something he offered to do.

When the full facts are known about the matter, there may be calls for him to resign as a District Councillor, but HDC have confirmed he still remains in that role.



The Riverporter

COUNCIL & COMMUNITY NEWS

Armed Forces Day about turn?

The most recent council meeting saw councillor Lyn Davies put forward an impassioned plea for the town council to consider moving the town's Armed Forces Day back to the town centre and away from Slepe Hall field where it was held last year.

Councillor Davies said that she had received many comments that the field was unsuitable, both from stall holders and visitors, however, following responses from several other councillors, who felt that the move to the new location needed more time, to 'iron out the bugs' the council decision was to leave the event at the new location for the time being.

... And more on the Neighbourhood plan

Councillor Nick Dibben whose current portfolio is to chair the preparation of the town's Neighbourhood Plan, reported that the town plan was now well under way but Councillor Dibben suggested that the work would greatly benefit from more input from the St Ives residents. He asked that *The Riverporter* help to give more publicity to this important project which the RP is pleased to do.

Any St Ives resident, keen to help shape the future of our town and who would like to hear of the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan so far, are urged to email the Town Hall for the attention of Councillor Dibben.

Email: clerk@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk

Positive effect on town centre trade?

Plans were approved by Huntingdonshire District Council for a further retail outlet on the site at Harrison Way. Branches of McDonalds, Costa Coffee, Subway and Eric's Fish Bar are already in place. Now the Abbey Group wants to build a two-storey building with the options of retail, food or professional services on the ground floor and business or a gym on the first floor.

Planners said that the overall impact of the existing outlets on trade in the town centre were positive, the additional building was considered to be acceptable on the site, and its impact on trade in the town centre was also described as acceptable.

Across the road on the Compass Point Business Park the new Aldi has been given the go-ahead to amend the design of the front of its new shop.

We wonder if our town centre businesses will agree with the planners? Ed.

Designated drivers... Are any of our St Ives pubs getting in on the idea?

Town residents are being urged by the police to encourage their local pubs to sign up to a scheme supporting the force's month-long campaign targeting drink drivers this December.

The scheme titled 'I'm DES' sees participating venues give free soft drinks to designated drivers. The initiative, led by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Road Safety Partnership (CPRSP), aims to reduce the number of road traffic collisions caused by drink driving over the festive period. Many licensed premises across Cambridgeshire successfully took part in the scheme over the summer and during last year's festive session.

Officers are keen to hear from venues across the county who wish to take part and are keen to get as many pubs and venues signed up as possible.

Venues participating in the I'm DES scheme are highlighted by the force and will receive posters to promote the scheme and wristbands to give away to people visiting the venues and acting as designated drivers.

Any pubs or venues interested in taking part in the scheme are asked to email LicensingSouth@cambs.pnn.police.uk

Strange going on at the District

Readers of the letters page in the Hunts Post will have noticed many comments about new parking charges in St Neots. Several District Councillors are unhappy about the new scheme, which is headed by Cllr Marge Beuttell, Exec Councillor for Operations and Regulation.

One Independent Cllr, Doug Terry also voiced his opinion on the Black Cat Radio social media page. What is interesting is not the complaint about parking charges, that also affect St Ives, which *The Riverporter* has written about, but the resulting comments from HDC's Managing Director Joanne Lancaster. It appears that Marge doesn't like criticism and this may have prompted Ms Lancaster to write to Independent councillors insisting on an apology from Cllr Terry for what she describes as stepping over the line on behaviour and for using social media.

We all know that comments on social media can be rude and even criminal, but we looked at Cllr Terry's comments and thought they were perfectly acceptable. We contacted Cllr Terry who said: 'I don't answer to Jo Lancaster I answer to the people who elected me and if she gets in touch that is exactly what I will tell her.'

In another twist Cllr Marge Beuttell's address has been removed from HDC's website and a letter in this weeks Hunts Post, from another St Neots Cllr, Barry Chapman wrote that Cllr Marge Beuttell was allowed to avoid offering any explanation of her actions at a HDC council meeting and instead read out a prepared statement of personal allegations against him [Cllr Chapman].

Readers may recall that the Editor also received a letter from Jo Lancaster, this time threatening to withdraw council services from him, shortly after *The Riverporter* exposed a fake scheme to reward market traders, which was publicised and promoted by Cllr Beuttell.



**Entries Invited for Our
Winter Fine Art &
Antiques Sale on 14th
December**



To Include a Good Collection of Fine Jewellery, Silver, Wines and Whisky



High Quality Ladies Platinum Diamond claw set Diamond Line bracelet 4.8ct
total estimated weight, 16.9g

SOLD £3000

Ornellaia 25 2010 Case of 6 Bottles
SOLD £750



Rare Glenmorangie 1978 Single Malt Whisky Tain L'Hermitage Finish with Paper label 70cl
SOLD £450

Good quality William IV Silver Foliate Wine Funnel London 1823 by George Burrows II,
155g total weight
SOLD £250



Next Antiques & Interiors Sale: Saturday 30th November starting at 11.00am

Hyperion Auctions, The Salerooms, Station Road, St Ives PE27 5BH
www.hyperionauctions.co.uk 01480 464140



On the Road to Christmas

Hemingford Ladies Choir

Musical Director
Lindsay Benson

Accompanist
Anna Aldous



Sunday
1st December
3pm at the Free Church
refreshments included

FREE Concert

... with a retiring collection in aid of the Free Church. Charity No 1132694.

ADVERTORIAL

SNOWMAN FESTIVAL 2019

Mike Ellis of Ellis Winters explains how to get your home priced correctly



elliswinters&co are pleased to be part of the annual Snowman Window Festival in St Ives.

Once again, there is a "Snowman trail" around the town, where children will be able to win a £200 Townrow gift voucher for collecting stickers from participating shops.

The competition starts on Saturday 23rd November and is for children under the age of 12. Mike Ellis, elliswinters&co Director, said: "We are a local company and get involved in many of the

town's events. It's a small way to give a little back to the town which has helped to make us so successful."

With Snowmen appearing all over the place, it's a great excuse for the whole family to spend some time together looking around the shops in the town to get into the Christmas spirit and just maybe win £200 worth of vouchers.

The winner will be the person named on the first Snowman Festival

Trail Map picked out of the hat on 20th December by the staff member appointed by the organising committee.

You can download a copy of the Trail Map and see more details at www.theoldriverportstives.co.uk



**ellis&co
winters**

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